

# GENERATING IDEAS



*Effective Brainstorming*



VENTURE DESIGN  
TOOLKIT

IDEO



# LET BRAINSTORM AROUND SOME ELEMENTS OF YOUR VENTURE



**CUSTOMER** / **EXPERIENCE** / **BUSINESS**

BRAINSTORMS TRY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT START WITH:



# H.M.W.

*(How Might We?)*



**ASSUMES  
SOLUTIONS  
EXISTS**



**IDEATE  
WITHOUT  
CONSTRAINTS**



**COLLABORATE**



# A “HOW MIGHT WE?” (HMW) SHOULD NOT...

*...be too big as to  
lack focus...*

NOR

*...be too small as  
to constrain.*



# THE RIGHT SIZE FOR A “HMW?” QUESTION:

## TOO BIG:



Doesn't give enough direction. The team needs a starting point to help generate ideas.

## TOO SMALL:



Implies that redesigning the cone is the solution. The team should think more broadly about where solutions could be.

## JUST RIGHT:



Frames the challenge without implying a solution.



# EXAMPLE HMW ?s:

TOO BIG:

*HMW design a book lending platform at Harvard?*

TOO SMALL:

*HMW display the list of loanable books on our website?*

JUST RIGHT:

*HMW help students get the books that they need each semester?*

## VIDEO: IDEO TEAM BRAINSTORMING



<https://vimeo.com/9849184>



***Through brainstorming you will generate lots of ideas. Ideas that you can then make tangible through prototyping, and test with people.***



IDEO



# RULES OF BRAINSTORMING





## *Defer Judgment*

There are no bad ideas at this point. There is plenty of time to judge later.





# ENCOURAGE WILD IDEAS

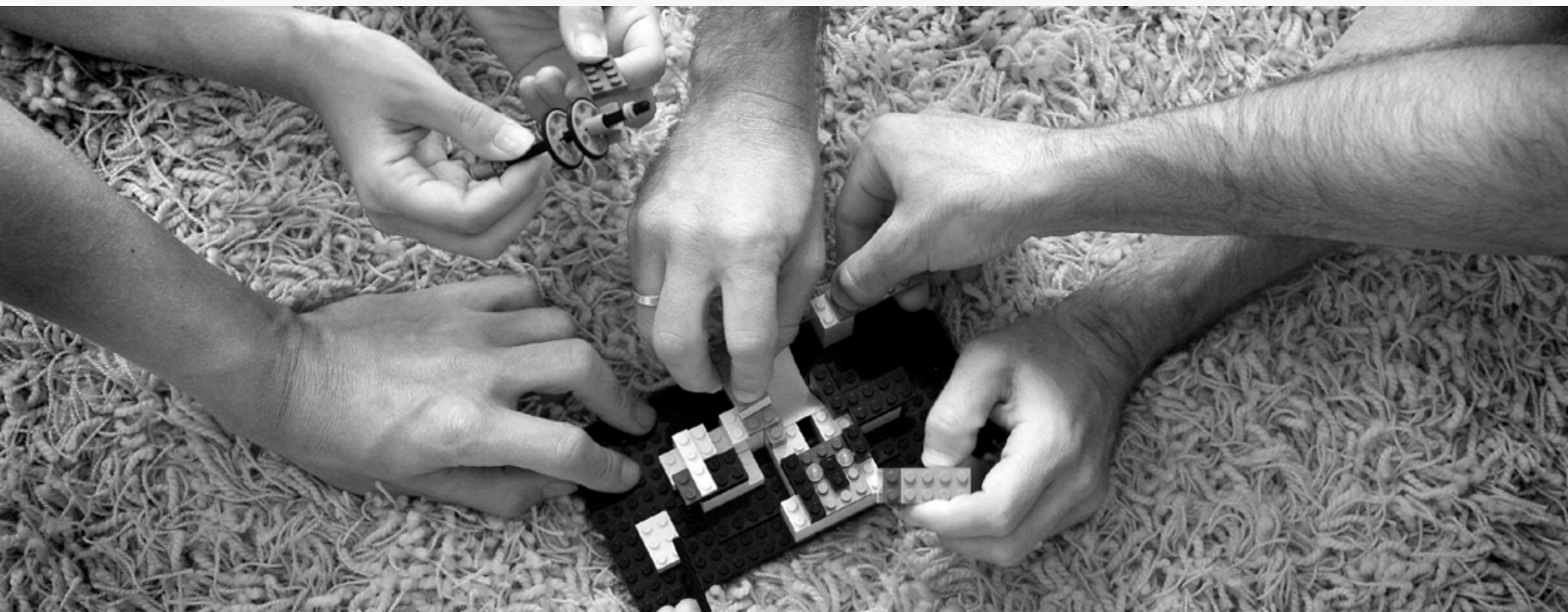
It's the wild ideas that often provide the breakthroughs. It is always easy to bring ideas down to earth later.





# BUILD OF THE IDEAS OF OTHERS

Think 'and' rather than 'but'.







# STAY FOCUSED ON THE TOPIC

You get better output if everyone is disciplined.





# ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME

That way all ideas can be heard and  
built upon.







# BE VISUAL

Try to engage the left and right side of the brain. Drawing makes ideas more memorable (even if you aren't an artist!) and gives a common understanding.





# GO FOR QUANTITY (NOT QUALITY)

Set an outrageous goal for how many ideas you want within a certain time - and surpass it.







# PREPARING FOR YOUR BRAINSTORM:

- 1.** Create a time constraint
- 2.** Choose a well defined topic
- 3.** Find a good space
- 4.** Have tools on hand to capture ideas
- 5.** Involve a diverse group of people



# CREATING THE RIGHT BRAINSTORM ATMOSPHERE:

- 1.** Choose a facilitator
- 2.** Present one question at a time
- 3.** Equip everyone for participation
- 4.** Keep it short and keep the energy high



# TIMING YOUR BRAINSTORM:

## **15 MINUTES PER QUESTION**

seems to be the sweet spot. After that, ideas tend to drop off and the team's ideas may be less fresh.

## **3-4 QUESTIONS PER SESSION**

is about the right amount to tackle. This will bring you to a total of about **45-60 minutes** per session. More than this can be taxing for the team.



# PRIORITIZING IDEAS AFTER A BRAINSTORM:

## **CLUSTER**

Group similar ideas into buckets, notice themes

## **VOTE**

Each person indicate which 2-3 ideas they think are most promising

## **PRIORITIZE**

Choose ideas to move forward and prototype



# WHAT'S NEXT?

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## *DO*

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### **BRAINSTORM SESSION**

*How should you run a fruitful brainstorm?*

### **EXPERIENCE MAP**

*Can you generate ideas around what different moments could look and feel like for your customers?*

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## *LEARN*

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### **SYNTHESIS**

**IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES TO  
CREATE VALUE**

*What design opportunities can you brainstorm around?*

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## *LEARN*

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### **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

**CREATING VALUE AT EVERY  
TOUCHPOINT**

*What moments and experiences can you generate ideas for?*

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## *Other Resources*

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▶ VIDEO

**IDEO TOYLAB  
BRAINSTORM**

BY IDEO